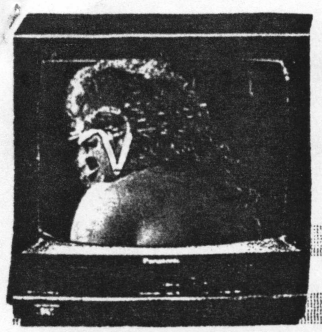

MATWATCH

213 Pine Hills Ave. Auburn Al 36830

VOL. 2, NO. 43 APRIL 23-29

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY AGREES TO NWA PACT

ATLANTA----Former NWA star Paul E. Dangerously has agreed to a new contract to return him to the promotion, likely for a May 1 starting date.

Dangerously (Paul Heyman) will be a color commentator on a yet to be determined show and likely will return to managing, though probably not with Mark Callous, as originally discussed.

Details of the contract were not available but it is believed to be a one-year deal.

Dangerously had been fired last September after a shouting match with former booker Ric Flair at THE CENTER STAGE in Atlanta during a WCW TV taping. He was booker for International Championship Wrestling in December and January.

DOUGLAS AXED BY NWA AFTER BATON ROUGE

BATON ROUGE, LA---NWA wrestler Shane Douglas was fired Thursday after reportedly refusing to do a heart punch job for Mark Callous.

Douglas (Troy Martin) had asked to do an alternative finish. According to insiders, one NWA booker had agreed to the change but road agents Joe Hamilton and Wahoo McDaniel told Douglas he had no choice but to take the heart punch.

Douglas is said to have been unhappy with the focus of his career since the dilution of the Dynamic Dudes tag team.

MATWATCH ON HIATUS FOR MAY 7-20

AUBURN AL---MATWATCH will not be published the weeks of May 7-13 and May 14-20 because of editor Steve Beverly's move to Jackson TN.

Readers whose subscriptions end during and after those weeks will have their orders extended. MATWATCH resumes May 21.

A Final Word

FUNK DESERVES BETTER

This is one of those I've stewed on for several days and will be the last comment I have on this specific issue. But it's as straight as my talk can be.

I am not a good friend of Terry Funk's. He's never had me to his house for supper. I don't have his phone number. I've only met the man personally one time---at Greensboro the night before WRESTLE WAR '90. I've strictly been a fan of his since he was doing jobs for Rocket Monroe in his rookie days on CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING FROM FLORIDA in the mid-'60s. So Terry wasn't named 1989 MATWATCH MAN OF THE YEAR because of some debt I owe.

Steve Beverly

Last week, I basically raised some questions about the balance of discipline between wrestlers and announcers in the NWA. And when Chris Cruise and Terry Funk opted not go on for the TV tapings in, both knew the consequences. Action has to be taken when a broadcast is missed. But I also challenge whether a dismissal is required on the first offense. Even Dan Rather survived walking off the CBS news set for that now-infamous 7-minute period in protest of a U.S. Open tennis runover in 1988.

I've been told two stories on the show rundowns for WORLD WIDE WRESTLING which omitted FUNK'S GRILL. One, the omission was an unintentional error and was to be corrected. The other, from some who examined the rundowns, that the episode timed out to its scheduled 58:50 without GRILL, an indication in some views that it was never intended to be included. Like anything in wrestling, only the principals involved know the unabridged story.

Terry Funk was sent a letter of termination two weeks ago but only, I'm told, after he had decided to quit World Championship Wrestling. He had enjoyed his period as a wrestler but increasingly hated the intense office politics of booking by committee. Terry loved doing FUNK'S GRILL but when his segment wasn't on the lineup, he felt it was time to go home.

Terry really wanted, according to close associates, the job of NWA booker. I think he would have been a tremendous one. If Funk has 15 outrageous ideas and only four could be used, you better listen because those four may be blockbusters.

The one time I ever had an extensive conversation with Funk, he told me: "I don't have any ill will toward anybody. I want to enjoy life and if I don't, I don't want to be around something." That was right after Terry told me how he genuinely believed the NWA could get its act together in another year. He was glowing over ideas he had for four new characters and even had sketches drawn to illustrate them. Further, despite whatever tensions may have existed between himself and Ric Flair, Funk was pushing heavily the idea for Flair to evolve from the old Nature Boy image to the "living legend" status.

Radio personality and independent promoter Joel Goodhart has organized a SAVE THE FUNKER campaign in the Philadelphia area. He pushed it on his radio show and at a local card over the weekend and I, for one, endorse it. I can't believe it's too late to do something. Not all of you may be Funk fans but one cannot argue how much heart he put into his last year in this backbiting profession. He did everything asked of him by WCW, put over Flair in one of the most brutal matches ever (in Troy NY) and still raised his own dignity. He's a former world champion and if you want to talk about legends, in my view, Terry Funk rewrote his own in 1989. Funk may have made a mistake but he deserves better. If you agree and you've never picked up a pen, do so this week. Write WCW, One CNN Center, Box 105366, Atlanta GA 30348-5366. Let's at least try to SAVE THE FUNKER.

I Remember...

DON CURTIS: MR. 1952 HAIRCUT

He had hair like the old Miami Dolphins quarterback Earl Morrall. It wasn't cut. It was mowed.

My best buddy Jim Blalock and I used to break up every Saturday when Bobby Shane would insult him as "Mr. 1952 Haircut."

Make all the hair jokes you want but Don Curtis may have been the most lightning-fast performer of his era 1950s to mid-60s era. He went on to win the NWA world tag team championship four times, twice with Mark Lewin (pre-Purple Haze) and once each with Joe Scarpa (pre-Jay Strongbow) and Eddie Graham. The Buffalo native then became one of the USA's top promoters and a respected civic leader in his adopted home of Jacksonville, Fla.

Curtis reminisced on WPDQ Radio's GREG LARSON ON SPORTS two weeks ago about the glory years when the Gateway City was one of the top wrestling locales in America. "From about '68 to '73 or '74, we drew an average of 6,000 people per week," said Curtis of the era which peaked during Jack Brisco's rise to the NWA world title. "People felt they had a personal relationship with the wrestlers then. Now, they don't."

Pressed to talk about the days of the Great Malenko as one of America's memorable meanies, Curtis told of a 1968 chain match between Malenko and Sailor Art Thomas. I remembered it well. I was there. "Malenko jumped Thomas from behind and tied up Art in that chain. Pretty soon, I saw fans coming out of their seats from every section, so I went to the ring and tried to get Malenko to stop but he wouldn't," said Curtis. "So, I took a wild swing and decked Malenko and Art finally got free and won. When I get back to the dressing room, here comes Malenko and he said, 'You so-and-so...if you EVER do that to me again.' I told him, 'Hey, I was trying to keep us ALL from getting killed tonight.' All I could see was lawsuits coming in all directions."

Genuine frustration exists, Curtis feels, in Jacksonville only having an average of three cards a year in the Coliseum today. "It goes back to the old personal relationship," said Curtis. "In Jacksonville, people want to have something to say about what goes on in their town. They don't like Atlanta or New York telling them what they get."

Don Curtis' greater mark is in work with youth programs and during the LARSON show, several callers were adult alumni of Don's wrestling camps. But the hair jokes may have to go. "Crewcuts are back in style," said Larson. "So Don may grow his hair back out to remain a non-conformist."

Pinfall Profile

NAME THAT TUNE

I can hear it now: "I can name that tune in 4 notes." "Duh...duh...duh..DUH!" "Theme from WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING!"

The signature of any television series, is the theme music. GREEN ACRES was punctuated with that familiar "you are my wife...goodbye city life" opening. Sherwood Schwartz actually sealed the sale of GILLIGAN'S ISLAND to CBS with that classic theme about a "three-hour tour." Never has a sports broadcast had a more familiar ring than the strains of the old Gillette theme for boxing---which you can often hear when you call (205) 826-RING.

Recently TV GUIDE rated theme songs of network soaps and it cued me during a slow wrestling news week, to view the musical aspect of TV wrestling. So, with a scale of 70 to 100, here's my golden medley of the ring:

[WWF] - Themes used on WWF shows are somewhat generic and interchangeable, all intended for quick cuts of personalities and action. I felt Vince dropped the best one he ever had last year when he changed the SUPERSTARS theme with the understated guitar and driving organ chorus. When those notes struck, you knew it was time for SUPERSTARS. That role now goes to the SATURDAY NIGHT'S MAIN EVENT theme, which is a crescendo-builder. Frankly, the PRIME TIME theme, though hardly melodic, is a good signature mix of music to video with SPOTLIGHT the most nondescript. So, here goes: SNME - 96; SUPERSTARS - 80; CHALLENGE - 85; PRIME TIME - 88; ALL-AMERICAN - 80; SPOTLIGHT - 75.

[NWA] - I can't deny it: I still miss the theme of the entire 1980s for WCW. It was a cut from a production music library but you knew what it was time for when it began. The current WCW theme is a more contemporary "power" theme but I wish TBS' Jeff Carr would publish those dynamic lyrics sung on the last CLASH. POWER HOUR may be the most melodic theme on the air but it reeks of generic TV music libraries. And MAIN EVENT was an okay theme when it began but tiresome now. In syndication, the newest WORLD WIDE theme sounds like strong sports intro music but NWA PRO reminds me of what it would be like to be locked inside an Auburn University fraternity party with no escape. Ratings: WCW - 92; POWER HOUR - 82; MAIN EVENT - 78; WORLD WIDE - 90; NWA PRO - 70.

The best and the worst of the rest:

CWA: How can you run down "2001?" But I wish Jarrett would use an original...90; PORTLAND: More contemporary than the theme of the mid-'80s but I liked the old song's beat better...85; USWA: Straight from a library; not good or bad, not as much of a signature as WORLD CLASS; PRO WRESTLING '90: Good driving theme and at least Joe didn't use that awful "mustard on my blue jeans" (though I like Hank Jr.'s version on MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL)...88; WINDY CITY: Not a bad theme but sounds like it was recorded in a wind tunnel....72; AWA/ESPN: Has there ever been a more monotonous organ? After five years, it drives me nuts....60 (off the scale). BEST THEME EVER: "High School Cadets," original theme of Atlanta's BIG TIME WRESTLING with Ed Capral. Donnie Dixon and I never failed to come to school Monday morning singing it.

SPECIAL NOTE

This is one of the weeks during our transition between Auburn and Jackson, TN, that we are unable to cover our usual complete listing of shows but will give 2-week updates on as many as possible next week.

SCALE

PINFALL! - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWER-SLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale.

(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Jake Roberts d. Joe Champ; UPDATE: Jack Tunney announ-ces I-C belt tourney; Curt Hennig d. Jim McPherson; Brutus Beefcake d. Chris Duffy; (From WM6) Earth-quake-Duggan; Ted DiBiase d. Sonny Blaze; Bubba Bossman d. Pez Whatley; Jimmy Snuka d. Brooklyn Brawler; ANGLE: (From S'STARS) Randy Savage/ Sherri jump Dusty Rhodes/Sapphire; BRO. LUV: Rhythm & Blues/Jimmy Hart; Rick Martel d. Tito Santana. RESTHOLD.

(WWF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Beefcake d. Duffy; Snuka d. Brawler; Martel d. Mario Mancini; (From WM6) Orient Express-Rockers; Orient Ex d. Thomas/Allen; Hart Foundation d. Black Bart/Scott Colantonio; I-C TOURNAMENT pairings; DiBiase d. Blaze. RESTHOLD.
[SUPERSTARS]: (WWF TAG TITLE) Demolition d. Bolsheviks to retain belts; Bossman d. Whatley; Hennig d. McPherson; BRO. LUV: Jim Duggan guests; Roberts d. Sonny Austin; Warlord d. Jimmy Long; Bushwackers d. Dale Wolfe/Colantonio. UPDATE: Sapphire/Dusty. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(USWA) - USWA TITLE: Jerry Lawler d. Bill Dundee using boot; Gary Young d. Dustin Rhodes when Skandor Akbar knocks Dust-in's foot off ropes; J.J. Funk double countout vs. Chris Youngblood; Kerry Von Erich d. Billy Travis when Terrence Garvin uses guitar; Chris Adams/Eric Embry/Matt Borne d. Jeff Gaylord/Steve Austin/Sheik Braddock by DQ but heels beat tar out of Eric. DRAW-PLUS.

(CNWA) - J.T. Stringer d. Trevor Remus; Mike Lozanski d. Lenny St. Clair; Diamond Timothy Flowers d. Randy Taylor; Great Gama/Akam Singh double DQ vs. Duke Myers/Goldie Rogers; Ron Ritchie d. Bulldog Bob Brown when Ed Whalen leaves announce table to count fall during ref bump. BOMB-PLUS.

(NWA/SYND.) - [WORLD WIDE]: Tony Schiavone (return)/Kevin Sullivan host; HANDICAP: Mark Callous d. Rick Ryder/Pat Rose; Bam Bam Bigelow d. Nasty Ned Brady; Steiners d. Punisher/Cuban Assassin; (From WCW) Rock & Roll Express d. Freebirds but 'Birds DDT R&R after; (WCW ANGLE) Luger-Flair-Horsemen brawl. RESTHOLD-PLUS.
[NWA PRO]: Brian Pillman/Tom Zenk d. Galaxians; (FEATURE) Flair-Luger-Ole; HANDICAP: Callous d. Raider/Chris Allen; Kevin Sullivan/Cactus Jack double DQ vs. Norman/Mike Rotunda and Norman left laying; CLOSING: Jimmy Garvin/Michael Hayes attempt hostile takeover of show but Lance Russell regains control. RESTHOLD.

(ICW) - Angel d. Abdul; Wild Bunch d. S. Jet/Destroyer; Road-block d. Billy Fortune; Equalizers d. Mike Watts/Joe Cruel; Undertakers d. D.Q. Madison/Cornbread Phillips. BOMB-PLUS.

(CWA/SYND.) - Dirty White Boys d. Ken Raper/Tom Hall; Chris Champion d. Tidell; Gaylord d. Clifton; John Tatum d. Foster; S. Rockers d. Raper/Rockin' Randy; Mike Awesome d. Tom Kelly. BOMB-PLUS.

(PRO WRESTLING 1990) - Billy Black d. Allen Horne but John (Bugman) Michaels sprays ring during match; Randy Rose d. Jeff Reynolds; CLASSIC: Sailor Art Thomas d. Sheik by DQ when Sheik throws fire; Peggy Lee Leathers d. Heavenly Starr & is named newest member of Dixie Mafia; INTL. MATCH: El Studente d. Nuclear Pilot; Mr. Wrestling II d. Invader by DQ when Shotgun Tony Gage runs in before Solid Gold saves. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(PORTLAND) - Ricky Santana d. Joey Jackson; Curtis Thomp-son d. Bill Francis; Rip & Larry Oliver/Billy Jack Haynes vs. Grappler/Brian Adams/Equalizer ends in no contest when garbage cans begin being thrown but after, Haynes decks Larry w. kendo stick, then sticks Rip off top rope to go heel; PACIFIC NW TAG TITLE: Juicers d. Al Madril/Scotty the Body 2-3 falls. ANGLE: 1) Tailor-Made Medina won't leave while holding hat for drawing for PACIFIC NW tourney pairings; 2) Scotty accepts challenge by security guard to armwrestling match; 3) Haynes badmouths Oregon & disowns state; 4) Larry slugs Scotty on interview when Scotty calls Larry chicken; FIESTA GARDEN: Scotty wins armwrestling match, begins gloating when Roddy Piper shows up. Piper puts Scotty down, grabs $100 & passes cash to fans; DRAWING: Haynes rummages through names to get to Larry Oliver's, then Grappler draws Equalizer. PILEDRIVER.

(NWA/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: (HANDICAP) Callous d. Rockin' Rebel/Terry Bronsen & 2 other jobbers heart punched out after; WNN: Gordon Solie updates Robocop/ Sting; Midnight Express d. Pillman/Zenk when Cornette clobbers Brian w. racket; Rick Steiner double countout vs. Butch Reed and after, Scott and Simmons join in brawl. POWERSLAM.
[GREATEST HITS]: Eddie Graham draw vs. Samu. NO RATING.
[WCW]: Eddie Gilbert d. Samu when Samu rammed into Joel Deaton but Deaton tries to plant knucks in Eddie's trunks. Ref reverses decision but reverses back when Tommy Rich snit-ches on "plant" but Samu/Deaton attack Rich; (HANDICAP) Callous d. Rose/Allen; Bigelow d. Cook; Norman/Abdullah the Butcher d. Galaxians; (From WWW): Hawk-Butch Reed series; (Last Week) Luger-Flair-Horsemen brawl; Michael Hayes d. Ryder; (RECAP) Pillman-Zenk/M Ex series; Pillman/Zenk d. Cuban A/Brady; Kevin Sullivan d. Fargo; Road Warriors toss out Rockin' Rebel/Terry Bronsen & start match with DOOM which finishes on NWA MAIN EVENT. RESTHOLD-PLUS.
[MAIN EVENT]: Windup of Road Warriors-DOOM melee; (Key Match) M Ex d. R & R Ex when Jimmy Garvin DDTs Robert Gibson; (ANGLE) Luger-Flair-Horsemen. DRAW-PLUS.

(PWF) - Hurricane Walker d. Wild Thing; Steve Keirn d. Joe Padiero; Lou Perez d. Coconut Kid but Jim Backlund destroys Perez after; Robert Fuller/Kendall Windham d. Lethal Weapons; Bounty Hunter I d. Hollywood Rob; Terminator d. Dennis Knight by DQ when Bounty runs in. BOMB-PLUS.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Scotty the Body, PORTLAND, to Roddy Piper: "You're a movie star. Weren't you in ERNEST GOES TO JAIL?" 2. Scotty, PORTLAND: "When Curtis Thompson first came here, he came out to WILD THING by The Troggs, then WILD THING by Tom Louck.

What next? The polka version?" 3. Jim Cornette, PH, to Bam Bam Bigelow: "In your neighborhood, the muggers didn't shoot you, they inserted the bullets manually." 4. Vince McMahon & Jesse Ventura, WWF: (V Mc) "I'm in a habit of repeating the great orators of our time." (JV) "Yeah. George Washington. Abraham Lincoln. Mick Jagger." 5. Kevin Sullivan, WWW, on Steiners: "They'd have been great on THE WIZARD OF OZ. They could have both played the scarecrow." 6. Bobby Heenan, PTW: "I've been to Jack Tunney's office many times. His secretary has eyes for me." 7. Heenan, PTW: "I know my own phone number and that's more than THEY (viewers) know." 8. Tony Schiavone, WWW: "I've done some odd things in my life but I've never really painted my hand." 9. Missy Hyatt, NME: "With that sequined dress I'll be wearing at CAPITOL COMBAT, Robocop may just shortcircuit and die." 10. Bugman Michaels, PW'90, as he sprays ring during Billy Black match: "I got a call there were some pests around here they wanted me to spray for."

11. Cornette, PH, on Abdullah: "He's so fat, his bathtub has stretch marks." 12. Ventura, WWF: "Bossman doesn't understand criminal justice in this country. If you have money, you don't do time." 13. Ventura, WWF: "Bossman doesn't go to country club prisons. That's where rich people sharpen up on tennis & croquet. That's where you probably go, McMahon: country club prison." 14. Brian Pillman, WWW, on SST: "The battle for these (U.S.) belts is gonna be longer than first grade ever was for you brain surgeons." 15. Sullivan, WWW, on Flair-Luger: "Talk is for lovers and these guys don't even like each other." 16. Scotty, PORTLAND: "The Olivers are cheating, and I, for one, won't stand for it." 17. Jim Ross, PH, on Mean Mark's carnage: "It looks like a bad car accident." 18. Teddy Long, NME, on Nick Patrick's high jump: "If he ever quits refereeing, he could get a job with the Atlanta Hawks." 19. Heenan, PTW: "The biggest thing at the Santana family reunion: jumper cables." 20. Heenan, PTW: "Santana is coming out with a new fragrance: Ode de Sombrero."

21. Cornette, WCW: "Captain Mike's crew looks like the cast of the Addams Family." 22. Cornette, WCW: "Norman & Abdullah have a weight problem. They can't WAIT to eat." 23. Heenan, PTW, on Bossman: "His real name is Barney. He's the third generation removed foster son of Barney Fife." 24. Scotty, PORTLAND, to Don Coss on Haynes' beard: "Haynes looks like Chester A. Arthur. You were around when he was President, weren't you Don?" 25. Cornette, WCW, on Pillman/Zenk: "They're not men. They're mice. They have cheese on their breath." 26. Billy Jack Haynes, PORTLAND: "The Oregon City Gym went under because all the Oregonians tried to pay for their initiation fees with food stamps." 27. Gordon Solie, PH, on Teddy Long: "We'll see if he's Sugar Ray or Sugar Pablum." 28. Ventura, WWF: "As smart as The Genius is, I wonder if he's discovered the formula for hair-growing." 29. Butch Miller, WWF: "Before we chew on Rhythm & Blues, let's do a little tenderizing." 30. Ventura, WWF, on Rona Barrett: "Old hag like her---I don't want to take her out."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. T. Long, NME: "NWA referees are the most incompetent in the world." 2. Sullivan, WWW: "I've come to the aid of the entire announcing staff tonight." 3. Heenan, PTW, on what DiBiase's money could do for Bossman: "He's from Cobb County, Ga. He could buy a new pig." 4. Haynes, PORTLAND: "Nobody supported the Oregon City Gym because Oregonians are all fat and out of shape."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Heenan, PTW, on Damien: "What's Jake feeding him? Hogs?" 2. Ross, WCW, to Cornette: "Have you ever been called Pinocchio." 3. Haynes, PORTLAND: "Where were these Oregonians two years ago when I was down and out?"

MOOT QUESTION OF THE WEEK - Gordon Solie, PH: "What kind of a referee will Terry Funk be?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. THE GORILLAVINE (Monsoon on his gossip sources). 2. OVERSTUFFED PREGNANT WHALE (Great Gama on Duke Myers).

BEST PICTURES - 1. PORTLAND, Haynes turn on Olivers. 2. PORTLAND, Piper-Scotty arm wrestling. 3. TBS, Rick Steiner stealing Teddy Long's hat. 4. TBS, Steiner-Reed match. 5. WWF, Bolsheviks shoving each other. 6. CNWA, Whalen counting pinfall.

BEST PROMO - TBS, for NME promo plugging Cornette as a "ladies' man."

BLOOPER AWARD - Al Madril, PORTLAND: "BICEPELES" for biceps.

BOO AWARD - Ed Whalen, CNWA, for counting the fall of Ritchie-Brown match. He has no business getting involved no matter the reasons.

TUBE TALK

I don't know how many of you were aware but POWER HOUR had two consecutive plays Friday night. When Braves-Reds were rained out, POWER HOUR was shown in full at 9 p.m. (ET) with an Eddie Gilbert-Samu GREATEST HITS at 10, followed by a second run of the same PH at 10:15, its scheduled time. Wonder how that affected the ratings?....Next Friday on PH, Ron Simmons vs. Scott Steiner....One of the funniest acts on TV now is Tim Dix blowing up over his ring announcer stint on PW'90 and his immiment conversion to a manager. Tim throws a much better fit than he calls play-by-play.

The byplay between Vince & Jesse was as good Saturday as it's been in a while. I loved the "country club prisons" lines....I won't belabor the point but while I've seen announcers become parts of angles in the past, it's totally out of line for one to get up from his seat and count a fall. Are you listening, Ed Whalen?....Contrary to current rumors, NWA not planning to get out of house show business. Some of the talk stems from recent studies ordered on revenues for Thursday-Sunday and those from Monday-Wednesday dates....I wonder if Piper will even make the tourney match for which he's scheduled since he's done the Don Owen date.

Finally, we bought a house in Jackson. Contract accepted Sunday morning. I won't publish the address yet because I don't want mail going to the current occupants. But it's in a subdivision called Sherwood Forest. FSB.

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WM6 REFEREE CHARGED IN PLOT TO KILL WIFE

TORONTO---WRESTLEMANIA VI referee and former wrestler John Bonello has been charged with "counseling first degree murder" in an alleged conspiracy to have his wife killed.

Bonello was arrested April 15 after an undercover police officer posing as a hitman had been paid $5,000 as a "down payment" for the proposed murder of Bonello's wife, Diane, 33, according to columnist Bob Lambertini of the TORONTO SUN.

Police inspector Ron Bain told Lambertini several meetings had been held with the undercover officer in the last two weeks. A bond hearing was held for Bonello Monday. The referee formerly wrestled in Canadian promotions as The Maltese Falcon.

MISSISSIPPI TRAGEDY: Condolences go to Jimmy Kimble, also known as King Cobra, who held the USWA heavyweight title for a brief period earlier in the year. Kimble's son Mike was one of three Jackson State University football players killed in an auto accident last Monday in Shuqualak MS. A car carrying Kimble and two other JSU players left a road near Macon MS and crashed into a tree 90 feet from the road.

WRESTLEMANIA FOLLOWUP: The official buy-rate for WM6 is now listed at 3.8% (495,000 homes), which would be a gross of less than $15 million. Titan's public estimate is 6% with 850,000 subscribers.

SUMMER SLAM AT $30: Incredibly, the plan is for SUMMER SLAM to be priced at $29.95, which I think will bury the chance of a big buy-in. If Titan thinks the high cost of WM6 didn't affect the revenues, it should look back at lower-income regions of the country which posted rates of less than 1%. I'm sorry. I think the public spoke even with the intensity of Hogan/Warrior and just won't pay more than $20 in large masses.

A BIGGER SLICE: Attorney Norman Roy Grutman is appealing a judgment in New York denying him half the settlement comedian Richard Belzer received for the 1985 injury he suffered from Hulk Hogan on Belzer's TV show. A judge has ruled Grutman is only entitled to the standard one-third cut. The official settlement figure has not been released.

CRUISE POST-SCRIPT: Chris Cruise was actually fired by telephone the night he walked away from the WORLD WIDE tapings. But MATWATCH has been told his apology to Jim Herd the next day was a personal, not professional, one, as Cruise stands by the principle of his decision. Sources close to Cruise say he apologized to Herd for letting him down because Herd took a chance on Cruise with no play-by-play experience. Associates say Cruise is not bitter and considers his eight months with the NWA some of the best times of his life. For one, MATWATCH hopes forgiveness can take place here.

WHERE'S TERRY?: Funk reportedly is resting at home in Texas and enjoying the fruits of the sale of most of a litter of 13 Rottweiler puppies.

MATWATCHING

COMBAT UPDATE: With the recent personnel shifts, here are a few changes to CAPITOL COMBAT May 19: Samoan Swat Team now faces Eddie Gilbert & Tommy Rich, instead of the Dynamic Dudes, and Johnny Ace goes against Mark Callous. Barry Windham and Arn Anderson will definitely be involved in the show but will not have individual matches unless plans change.

D.C. FORECAST: Jim Herd told me last week he believes D.C. Armory will sell out its 8,000 seats for COMBAT but a lot of people have doubts.

STEVE ON ROBOCOP: I've heard all the hardcore argument about what an insult Robocop is and I may have more to say about it next week. But I feel the COMBAT promo with Sting & Robo is the best piece Sting has ever done and Jim Claussen did a first-rate job with the production. As for Robo, you may not like it but it's a tie-in with a hot forthcoming movie and a definite kids' attraction.

TURNING THE PAGE: Diamond Dallas Page had a tryout with WCW at its tapings in Baton Rouge. Page was thought to have promise but Herd doesn't feel Page is ready for WORLD WIDE. Page may be brought in for possibly the syndicated MAIN EVENT to season him. Tony Schiavone did the WWW show solo at last week's tapings.

MORE VOICES: Some consideration is being given to elevating Teddy Long to the WWW color role after his recent work on the syndie NME. But all the color announcers are being told to build the personalities more, rather than spending as much time getting themselves over.

NEW FEUDER: With Terry Funk out, Rick Steiner gets Funk's slot on the NWA FAMILY FEUD team. Steiner joins Lex Luger, Sting and the Road Warriors on the flight to CBS Television City Friday for the FEUD taping. It airs May 7-11 and will be the CBS DAYTIME version, not the nighttime syndie edition.

WILL IT HAPPEN?: By the time some of you receive this, it will be history but speculation is flowing almost as wild as before the recent St. Louis and Chicago shows over an imminent NWA title change at the Meadowlands. Far be it from ME to say, lest certain principals want to point a finger.

ADAMS WINS TOURNEY: Brian Adams won the PACIFIC NORTHWEST championship in a Portland tourney Saturday night. But much of the talk is over Billy Jack Haynes' heel turn last week.

IT'S PIPER TIME: Speaking of...Roddy Piper did make his return to Portland TV and one has to ask how much he had to do with that spectacular show last Saturday. If Piper is reverting to a closet booker, that show could get hot again.

MORE IN THE COURTS: Anonymous sources tell MATWATCH Verne Gagne is reportedly filing suit against former AWA front office man Dale Gagner for alleged infringement of using the AWA name and some of Gagne's wrestlers on independent shows. Gagner reportedly is filing counteraction against Verne.

NAH, IT COULDN'T BE: Dusty Rhodes either has a legit or feigned leg injury and how it will affect the upcoming

(Continued on Page 6)

MATWATCHING

(Continued from Page 5)

programs with Randy Savage is uncertain. Dusty is reportedly quite upset over being told he would put Savage over.

POST-WM BLUES: Titan reportedly not overly concerned but watchful at only drawing 3,000 in Detroit with the big guns on top over the weekend. But one must remember, after its most successful WMs, the WWF didn't draw well for 3 months.

BAD WEEK IN ATLANTA: It was not a biggie for the NWA at the gate, either. Lost of weak houses and an anticipated sellout in Hammond IN did not materialize, though 4,500 showed in the 5,100 seat building. But it definitely hurt with Luger-Bigelow on top before Bam Bam had hit TV.

TAMPA TALK: At the Sportatorium Thursday night, Robert Fuller & Kendall Windham kept the Florida tag belts over the Nasty Boys and in a U.S. jr. heavyweight title bout, Jim Backlund knocked off Lou Perez.

GEORGIA TOURNEY: GEORGIA ALL-STAR will settle its Ga. title in a tourney May 17 at Lawrenceville. I'd bet on Nick Busich taking it all.

I-C TOURNEY: Two questions remain on this one after the announced pairings....will Piper even make his date after working for Dom Owen and does anybody NOT believe Curt Hennig will wind up with the belt? Expect Hennig to also wind up as the top dog in the Heenan Family.

FINAL NOTE: From Norm DaCosta's column in Toronto: "NWA announcer Joe Pedicino, who quit instead of becoming a heel because of his lucrative real estate business in Atlanta..." I'm glad to know Joe is pushing houses but I don't know if he knows it, Norm.

MATWATCH HOTLINE (205) 826-RING

We may be hard to reach in the next week trying to coordinate our move to Jackson but try us and leave news on the machine.

RATINGS RAP

PRIME TIME TOPS RATINGS;

WCW GETS MOST VIEWERS

In one of those quirks of the ratings calculator, PRIME TIME WRESTLING led the Nielsens in ratings for the week ending April 16 but WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING drew more viewers.

PTW scored a 3.4 rating and 5.3 share, to nose out WCW's 3.3 for its 3-hour special. But WCW's 1.78 million viewers (by virtue of TBS' larger universe) edged the 1.77 of PTW.

PRIME TIME rebounded well for a 21% increase over the previous week. TBS was pleased with the 3.3 average for its 6-9 p.m. marathon April 14, a full point higher than a three-hour edition (which included a POWER HOUR) last summer. The TBS special peaked at a 3.7/7.8 from 7:30-7:45, drawing 2 million viewers at that time, and even bleeding into network prime time, average a strong 7 share the full 3 hours.

NWA MAIN EVENT drew a strong 2.7 and 7 share, a lower rating but strong share for Easter Sunday when rating levels are usually down. Easter probably was responsible for sending WWF ALL-AMERICAN to a season low of 2.2.

In syndication, the WWF rolled to a 9.1-6.0 advantage, with the 6 being a low point for the NWA in the last 13 weeks. But the pre-WM 6 push still does not appear to be a big factor in the WWF's numbers, which are not reaching the record syndie levels of last year.

CABLE

Week Ending April 16	Rating	Share	Total Homes
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 4/16)	3.4	5.3	1.77 million
NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 4/14)	3.3	7.1	1.78 million
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 4/15)	2.7	7.0	1.46 million
NWA POWER HOUR (TBS 4/13)	2.3	4.1	1.24 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 4/15)	2.2	7.1	1.14 million
NWA POWER HOUR (R) (TBS 4/14)	1.1	9.6	594,000

SYNDICATION

Week Ending March 26	Rating/Sta.	Last Week	Year to Date
WWF	9.1	9.9	9.6
NWA	6.0	7.0	7.5

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